67. No fencing work of any kind was done in the Surat Division, but in the Panch Mahals 60 acres were enclosed with wire, to form a plantation, at a cost of Rs. 449.

Civil Suits.

68 The appeal made to the High Court by the *Isáfatdár* of Amgaon in the Váda Range of the East Thána Division against the decision of the District Court in the suit referred to in para. 111 of last year's report was not heard before the close of the year.

69. An original suit against the Forest Department was filed in the District Court of Thána by one Jan Mahamed Allana of Bombay for the recovery of damages amounting to Rs. 1,750 on account of the exclusion of $11\frac{3}{4}$ acres from the area of the coupe for 1890-91 at Kanher in the Bassein Range after its purchase by him. The suit was, however, compromised by payment of the claim under Government Resloution No. 8211, dated 10th November 1893.

Criminal Cases.

70. A forest guard, Vazirkhán Chándkhán, in the Kalyán Range, East Thána Division, was prosecuted for connivance in a theft of timber and was sentenced to two months' rigorons imprisonment, and the sentence was confirmed on appeal.

71. Another forest guard, Náráyan Balwant Khánolkar, in the West Thána Division, was prosecuted for an almost exactly similar offence, with the result that the convicting Magistrate sentenced him to pay a fine of Rs. 50, which sentence was upheld by the Appellate Court.

72. Both these men were of course dismissed and have since been gazetted as ineligible for any Government service.

IMPROVEMENT OF FOREST GROWTH.

(1).—*Natural Reproduction.*

73. Natural reproduction was reported by all the Divisional Forest Officers as fair during the year. In some places fires and grazing are said to have retarded it to some extent. No special cases are recorded from any division.

(2).—*Artificial Reproduction.*

74. In the two Thána divisions artificial reproduction by broad-casting of seed and transplantation of seedlings was confined to the exploited coupes. The results were fairly satisfactory. These cultural operations are partly done by forest guards and partly by paid labour.

75. The regular plantations in the West Thána Division at Deheri, Dáhánu and Persik, which are maintained for experimental and teaching purposes. showed fair results. They contain casuarina, sandal, date, Inga dulcis and other species.

76. The fodder reserves which are situated close to the B. B. & C. I. Railway line in the Máhim Range and which have hitherto been shown as plantations, because it was the custom for many years past to make plantations therein, were during the year finally classed as fodder reserves. These reserves from their situation will always return a far higher sustained revenue and a more urgently required produce yield under grass than they would under timber. Further attempts to produce forest growth in them is therefore deemed undesirable. The existing timber growth, which in places is considerable, will, however, be maintained.

77. In East Thána the small regular plantations undertaken in several places are said to have met with a modified degree of success.

78. In Surat, in addition to the regular transplanting operations in exploited coupes, the plantation near Tithal, referred to in paragraph 130 of last year's report, was continued and towards the close of the year was largely extended, but the results of this operation belong to next year's report.

79. In the Panch Mahâls an area of 60 acres was fenced with wire and sown in furrows 3 feet apart, but unfortunately the early promise of this plantation was falsified owing to the area being traversed by fire.

80. A total of 39,555 acres was treated at a cost of Rs. 1,948 under the head of "Cultural Operations" and Rs. 325 were spent on regular plantation during the year.

(3).—*Early Thinning.*

81. No such operations were carried out in this Circle.

(4).—*Other operations for the improvement of the growing Stock.*

82. Creeper cutting by forest guards was carried out as usual, but these men have so much to do that not nearly enough of this work is done and the whole establishment have their hands so full with the yearly increasing work in connection with the coupes that it is impossible to make any organized attempt to do this work with this agency. In West Thâna, however, an effort was made to clear away the "bindukli" (Loranthus longiflora, a species of mistletoe) by paid labour from the standards reserved in the coupes. This operation cost Rs. 108.

(5).—*Experiments.*

83. The Vejâlpur nursery, near Tithal in Surat, reported under this head last year (para. 130), has been transferred to plantations and noticed above. No other experiment is reported as having been tried during the year.

(*d*).—Exploitation of Major Forest Produce.

84. The Thâna forests continue to be worked on a system of coppice with standards with a revolution of 40 years. The reservation of standards is theoretically made to depend on the local conditions. The operation, therefore, varies from coppice with a few reserves to a fairly heavy improvement felling. It is evident that the controlling officers can do little personally in selecting reserves, but as the executive subordinates gain experience and are more and more composed of trained men, this selection of standards in accordance with local conditions will become more and more an important factor in forest working. As far as possible, the trees are sold standing under a contract for each coupe, the price being fixed in a lump sum for each coupe by public sale. Coupes for which no price, or only an inadequate one, can be obtained are worked departmentally, when local conditions require that leaf manure and wood for local consumption should be supplied. In the 284 blocks into which the forest area of the two Thâna divisions is provisionally divided, 276 coupes were laid out for exploitation during the year (coupes were not laid out in the other blocks because either they are classed as "climatic" and exempted from working or because owing to settlement in progress it was thought undesirable to work them). Of these, 126 were sold in each of the two divisions, but in addition to these, 40 coupes which had remained unsold in past years in East Thâna were sold and exploited. The total area brought under the axe was 8,029½ acres in East Thâna and 6,450 acres in West Thâna.

85. In one block only in East Thâna was it found necessary to exploit the coupe departmentally.

86. In the Surat Division exploitation was limited to the Dângs leased forests in which 11,213 cubic feet of green teak were exploited by selection felling, these forests not yet having come under organization. In the rest of the division the forests were not worked, the demand being met from revenue lands outside forests.

87. In the Panch Mahâls the forests were not worked, the material required to meet the demand being obtained from lands outside forest.

(*e*).—Extraction and Transport of Major Forest Produce by Land and Water.

88. There is nothing to be added to what was recorded under this head last year.